# Nationalist to Transnational Insurgency: State Repression and Violent Extremist Scale Shift

A Monograph

by

MAJ Thomas Visel
United States Army


School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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The phenomenon of global jihad, a transnational conflict often emerging from intra-state insurgency, highlights a weakness in states' security apparatus that non-state actors have exploited. In this study, I examine insurgencies that widen their objectives from nationalist or regional focus to transnational violent extremism – a process of scale shift – under conditions of state repression. The study shows that scale shift accelerates when state security forces repress and co-opt nationalist elements of an insurgency, insurgents in other countries support a transnational faction of the insurgency, and the transnational element becomes predominant. This suggests that the process of scale shift is characterized by decades of evolution based on transnational relationships, gradual replacement of nationalist goals, and diversification of resources to include external sources. I also find that the intervening variables of factional disunity, state repression, and state co-optation are key mechanisms for speeding and completing the scale shift. For counterinsurgency to be completely effective, an additional line of effort must address factions with transnational relationships, even though these are likely to be weak compared to more powerful nationalist groups.

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Transnational conflict, intra-state conflict, insurgency, mechanisms of scale-shift, Chechnya, Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Caucasus Emirate, Somalia, al-Itihaad al-Islamiyah, Islamic Courts Union, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, Al-Qaeda, Islamic State.

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Name of Candidate: MAJ Thomas Visel

Monograph Title: Nationalist to Transnational Insurgency: State Repression and Violent Extremist Organization Scale Shift

Approved by:

_____, Monograph Director
Daniel Cox, PhD

_____, Seminar Leader
Paul Schlimm, COL

_____, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
Henry A. Arnold III, COL

Accepted this 19th day of May 2016 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, PhD

**Abstract**

Nationalist to Transnational Insurgency: State Repression and Violent Extremist Organization Scale Shift, by MAJ Thomas Visel, 62 pages.

The phenomenon of global jihad, a transnational conflict often emerging from intra-state insurgency, highlights a weakness in states' security apparatus that non-state actors have exploited. In this study, I examine insurgencies that widen their objectives from nationalist or regional focus to transnational violent extremism – a process of scale shift – under conditions of state repression. My study shows that scale shift accelerates when state security forces repress and co-opt nationalist elements of an insurgency, insurgents in other countries support a transnational faction of the insurgency, and the transnational element becomes predominant. This suggests that the process of scale shift is characterized by decades of evolution based on transnational relationships, gradual replacement of nationalist goals, and diversification of resources to include external sources. I also find that the intervening variables of factional disunity, state repression, and state co-optation are key mechanisms for speeding and completing the scale shift.

This research recommends five changes to the US military approach to defeating violent extremist organizations. The first is the introduction of a scale of conflict to US military doctrine in JP 3-0 with intra-state, inter-state, extra-state, non-state, and transnational scales. The second recommendation is for US military doctrine to adapt its definition of insurgency to encompass the tendency of insurgencies to become transnational as a result of effective counterinsurgency. The third recommendation is the introduction of mechanisms of scale shift to explain why insurgents expand from intra-state to transnational conflict types. The fourth recommendation is that each counterinsurgency should include a transnational line of effort. The fifth recommendation is that counterterrorism and counterinsurgency targeting should focus on the relationships, in addition to the power, of an actor.

For counterinsurgency to be completely effective, an additional line of effort must address factions with transnational relationships, even though these are likely to be weak compared to more powerful nationalist groups.

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## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ADP | Army Design Publication |
| ADRP | Army Design Reference Publication |
| AIAI | Al-Itihaad al-Islaamiyah |
| AMISOM | African Union Mission in Somalia |
| AOR | Area of Responsibility |
| APRCT | Alliance for Peace Restoration and Counter Terrorism |
| ENDF | Ethiopian National Defense Force |
| AQ | Al-Qaeda |
| AQEA | Al-Qaeda in East Africa |
| BIF | Benevolence International Foundation |
| CE | Caucasus Emirate |
| ChRI | Chechen Republic of Ichkeria |
| COW | Correlates of War |
| FGS | Federal Government of Somalia |
| FM | Field Manual |
| FSB | Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti |
| FTO | Foreign Terrorist Organization |
| GCC | Geographic Combatant Command |
| ICU | Islamic Courts Union |
| IIPB | Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade |
| ISIL | Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant |
| JP | Joint Publication |
| LOE | Line of Effort |
| MCWP | Marine Corps Warfighting Publication |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |

| | |
|---|---|
| NBC | Nuclear, biological, chemical |
| SFA | Security Force Assistance |
| SNA | Somali National Army |
| SNM | Somali National Movement |
| SPIR | Special Purpose Islamic Regiment |
| SPM | Somali Patriotic Movement |
| SRRC | Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council |
| SSDF | Somali Salvation Democratic Front |
| TFG | Temporary Federal Government |
| TNG | Temporary National Government |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNOSOM | United Nations Mission in Somalia |
| UNOSOM II | United Nations Mission to Somali II |
| US | United States |
| USC | United Somali Congress |
| VEO | Violent Extremist Organization |

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## Introduction

While conflict between states is now rare, conflict between states and non-state or transnational actors is frequent.[1] Extremists in the Cold War period used violence to influence state policies and gain independence from governments they regarded as illegitimate. Post-Cold War extremism, pioneered by Al-Qaeda, has focused on asymmetric attacks aimed at spreading fear internationally and destroying the West.[2] The phenomenon of global jihad, a transnational conflict often emerging from intra-state insurgency, highlights a weakness in states' security apparatuses that is exploited by non-state actors. In this study, I examine insurgencies that widen their objectives from nationalist or regionally focused to transnational violent extremism – a process of scale shift – under conditions of state repression. My study shows that scale shift occurs when state security forces repress and co-opt nationalist elements of an insurgency, insurgents in other countries support a transnational faction of the insurgency, and the transnational element becomes predominant. This suggests that the process of scale shift is characterized by long-term evolution based on transnational relationships, gradual replacement of nationalist goals, and diversification of resources to include external sources.

## Literature Review

Current US military doctrine inadequately explains how militants shift from insurgency to transnational extremism, but the literature on contentious politics offers useful lenses for understanding this phenomenon. Military science describes commonalities between militant actors struggling to achieve a multitude of ends, using a variety of ways and means. The US

[1] Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism Trends and Prospects" in *Countering the New Terrorism*, eds. Ian O. Lesser, Bruce Hoffman, John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, and Michele Zanini (Washington, DC: RAND, 1999), 9-10.

[2] Randy Borum and Michael Gelles, "Al-Qaeda's Operational Evolution: Behavioral and Organizational Perspectives," *Mental Health Law & Policy Faculty Publications*, Paper 540 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2005), 468-469.

military joint doctrine describing operations, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 *Joint Operations* (2011), refers to a "conflict continuum," or a typology of conflict between peace and war, but does not arrange specific types of conflict on the continuum.[3] Field Manual (FM) 3-0 *Operations* (2008) is the latest US Army doctrinal publication that includes a typology of conflict under the now-abandoned doctrinal concept of Full Spectrum Operations. The typology of conflict in FM 3-0 includes four types of conflict: stable peace, unstable peace, insurgency, and general war.[4] Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0 *Unified Land Operations* (2011) specifically avoids the typology of conflict methodology implied in Full Spectrum Operations and instead refers to the Army's need to operate along the range of military operations.[5] The US military's departure from a typology of conflict and emphasis instead on a range of military operations focuses on the application of military power rather than the objective study of conflict in its many forms. However, the typology of conflict construct is a useful tool for understanding the operational transitions, scale shifts, and organizational development studied in this paper.

Insurgencies often expand across states, regions, or continents. However, the latest US Army insurgency doctrine places insurgency, rebellion, insurrection, revolution, civil war, and coup d'état in the context of intra-state conflict between a constituted government and the people within the state.[6] This definition of insurgency limits understanding of transnational participation

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[3] Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 11 August 2011), I-5; JP 3-0, V-1.

[4] Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, February 2008), 2-1–2-2.

[5] Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 16 May 2012), foreword; Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 2011), 7.

[6] Field Manual (FM) 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, May 2014), 4-1.

by violent extremist organizations in extra-state, non-state, and transnational conflict. Doctrinal examination of non-state actors exclusively within an intra-state construct constrains our understanding of violent extremist organizations' (VEO) transnational goals, capabilities developed through transnational participation, access to international resources, and the spread of common tactics, including terrorism. The treatment of insurgency in US doctrine excludes transnational VEOs and non-state threats, and handicaps US military, interagency, and partner nation responses to trends in transnational extremism.

The political science literature provides a typology of conflict that can be a useful addition to US military doctrine. The Correlates of War (COW) typology, first presented by Singer and Small in 1972, divides conflict into inter-state wars and extra-systemic wars between states and non-state actors. Singer and Small added civil wars to the COW typology in 1982 to describe wars within a state.[7] Sarkees contributed to changes in the COW typology in 2000 with conflicts categorized as inter-state, extra-state, intra-state, and non-state.[8] Sarkees defined intra-state conflict as organized armed conflict that competes against or resists a state's security forces and that results in a minimum of 1,000 total combatant fatalities per year.[9] Subsequent work by Sarkees, Wayman, and Singer subsumed non-state wars under the category of intra-state wars as "inter-communal wars" alongside a civil war category due to COW's focus on the territorial state.[10] The latest changes are less useful for understanding scale shifts of intra-state insurgencies

[7] J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil War, 1816–1980* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 205-206.

[8] Meredith Reid Sarkees and Phil Shafer, "The Correlates of War Data on War: an Update to 1997," *Conflict Management and Peace Science, 2000,* Vol. 18, Issue 1 (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 123–144.

[9] J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *The Wages of War, 1816-1965: A Statistical Handbook* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1972), 49.

[10] Meredith Reid Sarkees, Frank Whelon Wayman, and J. David Singer, "Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution over Time, 1816-1997," *International Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 47, No. 1 (Mar., 2003) (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 59.

to transnational violent extremism. Additionally, US military joint doctrine describes transnational threats as "any activity, individual, or group not tied to a particular country or region that operates across international boundaries and threatens United States national security or interests."[11] This suggests that conflicts can be categorized by their level or scope as *transnational* in addition to inter-state, intra-state, extra-state, and non-state. This study focuses on the behavior of insurgencies that transition from intra-state to transnational conflict.

The literature on contentious politics provides a useful model for analysis of transition, or scale shift, from intra-state to transnational conflict. The study of contentious politics describes armed struggle encompassing the typology of conflict.[12] Scholars examine mechanisms and processes of political conflict, which can include violence. Mechanisms are the types of events that alter relationships among sets of elements, changing the nature or scale of conflict.[13] Tilly and Tarrow describe "emerging transnational composite regimes" characterized by conflict spanning state borders and using international access provided by globalization.[14] Globalization's agenda of transnational connectedness allows extremists to create new processes of transnational activism, transnational coalitions, and the rapid international diffusion of contention.[15] These connections create mechanisms of scale shift resulting in transnational conflict. While this

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[11] Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 8 November 2010 as amended through 15 June 2015), 248.

[12] Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, "Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements," *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing*, eds. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.

[13] Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 30-34.

[14] Ibid., 161-163.

[15] Ibid., 171-172.

literature has contributed to scholarship on scale shift to transnational conflict, there is limited work on transitions between between levels of conflict, behavior of actors as they transition, or the effect of scale shift on the success of the struggle within specific contexts.[16]

Tilly and Tarrow provide a useful model for understanding scale shifts between conflict types, some mechanisms of scale shift, and VEO behavior during scale shift. They identify coordinated action, brokerage, and diffusion as the primary mechanisms explaining scale shift. Coordinated action describes two or more actors synchronizing their efforts toward common goals. Coordination is facilitated by brokerage between groups, which produces new connections between previously independent actors. Diffusion allows ideas to spread beyond their originators and provides common frames for future coordinated action and brokerage.[17] Diffusion of transnational extremism can be facilitated indirectly by mass media, intermediaries spreading ideology and methodologies, or through personal relationships among factional groups.[18] Tilly and Tarrow suggest that during scale shift VEOs increase their power by adopting transnational objectives, creating transnational groups, and coordinating action across international boundaries.[19]

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[16] Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 196-197.

[17] Ibid., 31.

[18] Ibid., 94-95.

[19] Ibid., 31.

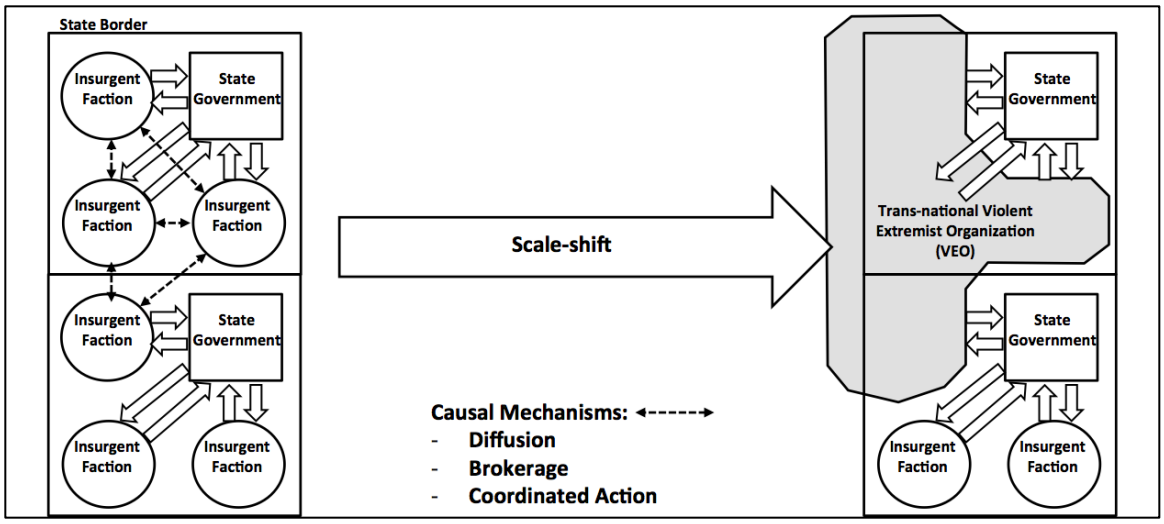


Figure 1. The Tilly-Tarrow Model of Scale Shift

Source: Adapted from Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 196-197.

The Tilly-Tarrow model also suggests that transnational conflict displaces intra-state conflict by deactivating boundaries between states and activating new boundaries across state borders, requiring VEOs to create and sustain larger organizations.[20] According to this model, VEOs pursue scale shift because of the strength of their transnational brokerage and, in the process, lose their focus on intra-state conflict. This model is useful for understanding scale shift as a process of gaining power through transnational brokerage but inadequately describes the behavior of VEOs that become more transnational under conditions of state or international pressure.

## Methodology, Theory, and Definitions

In this paper, I demonstrate that transnational scale shift is accelerated by state or international pressure, contribute three additional mechanisms to refine the Tilly-Tarrow model,

[20] Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 177.

and recommend ways to understand and counter transnational scale shift. The three mechanisms that I introduce – disunity, repression, and co-optation – describe the behavior of insurgencies and their scale shift under pressure. Disunity is disagreement and conflict within a group.[21] Repression is the attempt by a state or its agents to arrest, harass, or destroy challengers.[22] Co-optation is the incorporation of previously excluded actors or groups into existing power structures.[23] These mechanisms help explain the scale shift from intra-state to transnational conflict in the two case studies this paper examines.

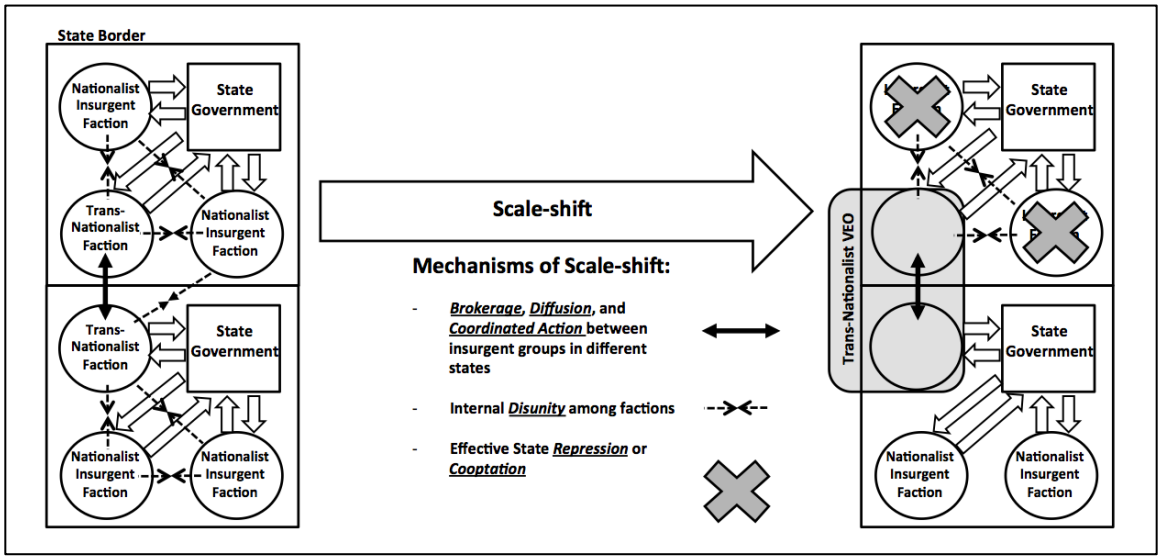


Figure 2. New Model of Scale Shift under State Repression or Cooptation

Source: Author created.

[21] "Definition of *disunity* in English," Oxford Dictionaries, accessed 27 February 2016, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/disunity.

[22] Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics, Second Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 37.

[23] Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, "Comparative Perspectives on Contentious Politics," *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure, Second Edition* eds. Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 274.

The first case study examines the scale shift of Chechen insurgency from the formation of nationalist Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI) to the transnational Caucasus Emirate (CE). The second case study examines the scale shift of Somali insurgency from the formation of the nationalist al-Itihaad al-Islaamiyah (AIAI) to the transnational Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (Al-Shabaab). Each case demonstrates commonalities in insurgent behavior. Both formed in 1991 in the chaos following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the assertion of US power during the Gulf War. Insurgents in both cases developed transnational relationships rooted in the Soviet-Afghan War, furthered by global media and communications, and fostered by access to the Al-Qaeda hub of transnational support. They both also attempted and failed to maintain independence during periods of weak state pressure interrupted by episodes of effective state repression. The cases diverge in the intensity of their internal competition during periods of independence, the strength of state repression, and the governance structures in their states. I examine the history of each insurgency from its initial formation to its present participation in transnational conflict, highlight examples of transnational support to the insurgency, and analyze the mechanisms contributing to the scale shift. By applying the Tilly-Tarrow model to these examples of scale shift under state and international pressure, this research examines the mechanisms driving transnational scale shift, the behavior of VEOs during this process, and the effect of state pressure on transnational conflict.

## Scale Shift in Chechen Insurgency

The first case study analyzes the scale shift from intra-state Chechen insurgency to the Caucasus Emirate's (CE) transnational conflict. Insurgency in Chechnya before the scale shift was initially nationalist in character. Russian state repression, transnational VEOs drawn to Chechnya to combat Russia, and Chechen factions' overtures to transnational VEOs for support led to scale shift. The Tilly-Tarrow model explains this scale shift by the mechanisms of transnational brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action. My analysis of the Chechen

insurgency demonstrates the impact of disunity, repression, and co-optation on accelerating this scale shift.

History of Chechen Insurgency

Chechen independence came relatively easily after the collapse of the Soviet Union, leaving a culturally homogenous Chechnya with the ability to defy limited Russian control. The Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI) gained independence in 1991 under the leadership of the chairman of the Chechen Congress, Dzhokhar Dudayev, and created the independent ChRI by unifying four powerful actors with access to resources and militias. Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev's Vainakh Democratic Party included branches in nearly every Chechen village. Yaragi Mamodayev provided financial resources to the movement. Beslan Gantemirov's Islamic Path party provided a paramilitary militia that became the "National Guard" of Dudayev's party and coordinated intimidation and attacks against the movement's opponents. Yusup Soslambekov, an influential orator, provided diffusion of the nationalist message.[24] Dudayev and these power brokers created the Chechen National Congress party.

In September 1991, the Chechen National Congress party convened the Chechen Congress and declared the formation of a new republic, the ChRI. The separatist movement immediately seized the national television station, created armed militias, distributed food to Chechen citizens, publicly demonstrated, and forced the Chechen parliament to sign an 'act of abdication' on 06 September 1991. Dudayev gained cooperation from Ruslan Khasbulatov, a close associate of Russian president Boris Yeltsin, resulting in the state security apparatus giving up without a fight. Although opposition groups formed in the wake of Dudayev's takeover, Russia's televised announcement of a state of emergency in Chechnya on 08 November 1991 and the threat of Russian repression allowed him to galvanize a wider nationalist movement in

[24] Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 91-92.

Chechnya and mobilize thousands of fighters and hundreds of thousands of public supporters. The movement quickly defeated an attempted counter-revolution by six hundred Russian Interior Ministry troops who landed at the Khankala military airbase, were surrounded by Chechen forces, and surrendered.[25] This initial Chechen insurgency was at an intra-state scale and had nationalist goals.

Chechen independence lasted only four years before Russia, uncomfortable with Chechen overtures to the United States and Europe, attempted to reassert control through repression. Russia wanted to preclude Western powers from threatening oil interests and gaining strategic partnerships on Russia's southern flank.[26] Before the Russian invasion, the ChRI's failure to establish effective governance and provide economic opportunity created internal disunity as factions acted semi-independently. Between 1992 and 1994 factions loyal to Dudayev and an opposing faction, the Russian-supported Provisional Council of the Chechen Republic, vied for power in an undeclared period of Chechen civil war.[27] Russia provided opposition forces with finances, military equipment, and mercenaries. Russian and opposition troops launched two clandestine assaults on Grozny in October and November, both of which failed. The televised public display of twenty-one captured Russian soldiers, the only living remains of forty-seven tank crews secretly hired by the Russian intelligence service to support the Provisional Council's offensive against the ChRI, proved enough cause for Moscow to order a Russian invasion in December 1994.[28] The ChRI defeated the Russian attack during the First Chechen War, and

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[25] Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 92-102.

[26] Sebastion Smith, *Allah's Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya* (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 1998), xxiv-xxv.

[27] Robert W. Shaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2011), 122-123.

[28] Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 155-157.

Russian forces withdrew from Chechnya on 31 December 1996.[29] Its operations focused on defending the Chechen state, and consisted of urban defenses followed by withdrawal into the Caucasus Mountains to regroup and counterattack. Under Dudayev's protracted popular war strategy and urban insurgency, the ChRI successfully resisted the Russian invasion and occupation.[30]

The Russian attempts at repression did not result in a scale shift during the First Chechen War because of the ChRI's victory, though costly, and the insignificance of mechanisms of transnational brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action to the majority of Chechen fighters at that time. Military operations in the First Chechen War focused on the defense of the capital, Grozny, and successfully repelled the Russians. Chechen forces prepared the defense of Grozny for three to four months before the Russian attack, dividing the city into zones of responsibility for independent, mobile militia elements. Many of the Chechen fighters trained in the Soviet Army in World War II-style urban combat. They seem to have retained more of their training than their Russian opponents who, except for specially designated Spetznaz Special Forces units, did not prepare for urban combat.[31] Some Chechen fighters without Soviet military training trained in Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and Turkey.[32] Chechen militia training for urban guerrilla operations, preparation for Russian invasion, cultural homogeneity, strong will to resist, and advantages in communications and experience allowed Chechen commanders to conduct an attritional war against Russian forces primarily consisting of urban and mountain ambushes.[33] A

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[29] Mark Galeotti, *Russia's Wars in Chechnya, 1994-2009* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2014), 48.

[30] Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2011), 242.

[31] Olga Oliker, *Russia's Chechen Wars 1994-2000: Lessons from Urban Combat* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2001), 17.

[32] Ibid., 17.

series of terrorist attacks in 1995 eventually achieved Chechen political demands including an immediate cease-fire, withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya, and the beginning of peace talks to decide Chechnya's political status.[34] By the end of the First Chechen War, Chechen militant operations under the ChRI followed an operational approach with two lines of effort using a terrain-focused defense to trade space for time and degrade the Russian military and information operations to demonstrate Russian military weakness to its citizens; highlight atrocities against the Chechen population; and persuade the Russian government to offer a political settlement with the ChRI.

Despite the failure of the Russian attempt at repression, the attack introduced the mechanisms of brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action – captured by the Tilly-Tarrow model – by drawing the participation of Al-Qaeda associates to Chechnya. The first relationships leading to transnational scale shift entered during the First Chechen War under conditions of Russian state repression. Shamil Basayev established the first ties with Al-Qaeda by visiting Al-Qaeda training camps near Khost, Afghanistan, with thirty of his multi-ethnic Abkhaz Battalion fighters between April and July 1994.[35] Foreign fighters arrived in Chechnya in the mid-1990s to help Basayev and the ChRI fight the Russian invasion and diffuse transnational objectives related to forming an Islamic caliphate. The most critical link between transnational VEOs and the ChRI was an influential Al-Qaeda leader named Thamir Saleh Abdullah 'Ibn al-Khattab.' Khattab was a Jordanian foreign fighter who arrived in Chechnya in the mid-1990s and became Shamil Basayev's advisor. He was a member of Al-Qaeda and a personal friend of Osama bin Laden,

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[33] Olga Oliker, *Russia's Chechen Wars 1994-2000: Lessons from Urban Combat* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2001), 20.

[34] Ilyas Akhmadov and Miriam Lanskoy, *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 51.

[35] Gordon M. Hahn, *The Caucasus Emirate Mujahedin: Global Jihadism in Russia's North Caucasus and Beyond* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2014), 26.

allowing him to serve as the conduit for transnational support to the Chechen Wars.[36] During the wars and in the interwar years, Khattab brought in hundreds of foreign fighters, produced propaganda videos portraying the Chechen cause as a transnational conflict, raised funds for the conflict from donors in other states, and orchestrated the mechanisms of brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action. By 1995 approximately 300 Arabs from Afghanistan and others from Bosnia and Azerbaijan relocated to Chechnya to support Khattab's jihadi objectives.[37] At this time, without effective Russian repression or co-optation, his jihadi ideology only diffused to a few factions of the ChRI, such as the Basayev faction.[38] Nonetheless, Khattab's foreign fighter battalion established the personal connections required for transnational conflict and foreshadowed the shift in Chechen insurgency from intra-state to transnational conflict.

Chechnya returned to a state of disunity in the years after the First Chechen War. In an environment of factional competition, relationships between Chechen fighters and transnational VEOs strengthened as Chechens militants traveled to Al-Qaeda training camps outside the region.[39] The Chechen faction under militia commander Movlady Udugov met with Osama bin Laden in 1997. Bin Laden subsequently called for transnational conflict across seventeen specific states or provinces, including Chechnya and Dagestan, and three regions including the North Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Persian Gulf.[40] The influx of foreign fighters created new pressures to expand intra-state conflict throughout the region. Unclaimed Chechen attacks on

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[36] Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011), 3.

[37] Ibid., 3.

[38] Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 308.

[39] Elena Pokolava, *Chechnya's Terrorist Network: The Evolution of Terrorism in Russia's North Caucasus* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2015), xiii.

[40] Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011), 3.

train stations in Armavir and Piatigorsk, Russia, in April 1997 demonstrate increasing ChRI disunity before the Second Chechen War.[41] Al-Qaeda foreign fighters, mostly from other states in the Caucasus region, participated in Basayev's invasion of Dagestan in 1999, sparking the Second Chechen War.[42] Basayev and Khattab led 1,500 Chechen, Avar, and Dargan Dagestani forces on a raid into Dagestan and temporarily established an Islamic State of Dagestan.[43] In September 1999, a second invasion of Dagestan by Basayev and Khattab and a series of terrorist attacks including the bombing of Moscow apartments provided enough cause for renewed Russian military operations in Chechnya.[44] The brokerage between Al-Qaeda and Basayev's forces, diffusion of Al-Qaeda's ideology of transnational conflict through foreign participation in the Chechen conflict, and coordinated action including support to raids and foreign support, set conditions for the Chechen scale shift. The conditions of disunity, repression, and co-optation in the Second Chechen War were required to complete the scale shift to transnational conflict.

Brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action during the interwar years changed Basayev's operational approach from defensive intra-state insurgency and protracted popular war inside Chechnya to incorporation of foreign fighters and transnational conflict. Basayev and other Chechen militant leaders established a network of training camps in Chechnya and Georgia. Approximately 100 foreign instructors and Chechen militants with experience in the First Chechen War ran these camps. Camps focused on different tactical specialties including

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[41] Elena Pokolava, *Chechnya's Terrorist Network: The Evolution of Terrorism in Russia's North Caucasus* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2015), 90.

[42] Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011), 3.

[43] Gordon M. Hahn, *The Caucasus Emirate Mujahedin: Global Jihadism in Russia's North Caucasus and Beyond* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2014), 40-41.

[44] Elena Pokolava, *Chechnya's Terrorist Network: The Evolution of Terrorism in Russia's North Caucasus* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2015), 93-105.

asymmetric tactics and marksmanship (Alos Abudzhafar camp), heavy weapons (Yakub camp), diversionary and terrorist attacks (Abubakar camp), and psychological and ideological warfare (Davlat camp).[45] Basayev's faction received increasing amounts of support during this period from external actors and his faction became more ideologically extreme as transnational ideologies and tactical methods diffused.

Russia invaded Chechnya on September 23, 1999.[46] The Second Chechen War proved much more difficult for the ChRI as Russia applied both repressive and co-optive pressures against a disunified ChRI. During the first phase of the war from August 1999 to May 2000, Basayev's faction and other emulators extended attacks into Russia in a desperate attempt to curb the ChRI's tactical defeats by expanding the conflict, but they met a better organized and more committed Russian army that would not relent as it did during the First Chechen War. These operations became more extreme due to diffusion of Al-Qaeda's jihadi tactics. The attacks included terrorist attacks on crowds in Russian cities including Moscow, bus and plane hijackings in March and July 2001, attacks on Budennovsk and Kizlyar, and the 2002 Dubrovka Theater attack.[47] The hostage takers at the Dubrovka Theater immediately released all foreign hostages and demanded that Russia withdraw troops from Chechnya, cease artillery and air attacks, and negotiate an end to the Second Chechen War. Despite Russian government insistence that the Dubrovka Theater incident and the other external attacks against Russia represented international Islamic terrorism, most of the ChRI still supported the Chechen nationalist objectives of Russian ceasefire and withdrawal from an independent Chechnya.[48] Although conducting external attacks

[45] Olga Oliker, *Russia's Chechen Wars 1994-2000: Lessons from Urban Combat* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2001), 39-40.

[46] Elena Pokolava, *Chechnya's Terrorist Network: The Evolution of Terrorism in Russia's North Caucasus* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2015), 93-105.

[47] Ibid., 113-114.

[48] Ibid., 126.

into Russia, Chechen fighters continued to focus on intra-state conflict and Chechen nationalist goals.

During the second phase of the war, a counterinsurgency from June 2000 to April 2009, conditions of disunity, repression, and co-optation prevented the ChRI from applying the protracted popular war strategy that was central to the nationalist insurgency. Russian co-optation of Ramzan Kadyrov's faction eroded the Chechen insurgency's unity against a common enemy. The Islamist factions of the Chechen insurgency continued to resist Russian rule, while other factions cooperated with Russia and formed a semi-autonomous Russian province under Kadyrov. Russia's co-optation of Kadyrov removed the nationalist element of the ChRI insurgency, leaving only Umarov's Islamist faction fighting the intra-state conflict. Forced to operate out of mobile encampments in the Caucasus Mountains and isolated safe-havens outside Chechnya, seeking sanctuary from Russian Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti (FSB) assassination, and failing to maintain legitimacy as Kadyrov gained support for reconstruction and an end to the struggle, ChRI President Doku Umarov chose to use Salafist Islamic ideology to strengthen unity among the remnants of Chechen resistance. This period changed the political nature of the Chechen insurgency.[49] The ChRI's goals ceased to be nationalist and shifted to the establishment of a transnational Islamic state encompassing the Caucasus region and subordinate to the Al-Qaeda caliphate.[50]

On October 27, 2007, Umarov declared the nationalist ChRI insurgency dissolved and established the transnational *Imirate Kavkaz* or Caucasus Emirate (CE).[51] During a meeting of the group's leaders in April 2009, Umarov more clearly articulated the CE's new goals of

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[49] Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2011), 235-236.

[50] Elena Pokolava, *Chechnya's Terrorist Network: The Evolution of Terrorism in Russia's North Caucasus* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2015), 160-162.

[51] Ilyas Akhmadov and Miriam Lanskoy, *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 243.

establishing an Islamic state encompassing the region that would be subordinate to Al-Qaeda and under Sharia law and that would provide assistance to other VEOs involved in a global jihad. The Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of the Chechen Martyrs, the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR), the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB), the Ingush Jamaat, the Liberation Army of Dagestan, the Shariat Jamaat, and the Yarmuk Jamaat joined the CE, increasing its power. The CE under Umarov reorganized these factions into six "vilayet" provinces reporting to Umarov as Emir, or military leader.[52] In 2013, the group consisted of 400-1500 fighters inside Chechnya.[53] Rather than being a continuation of Chechen intra-state conflict, the CE's decision to support global jihad made it the first Chechen VEO to support transnational conflict rather than simply benefitting from foreign support to the Chechen nationalist insurgency.

After 2009, the CE worked to create a regional state incorporating the Russian provinces of Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia, Adygea, Stavropol Kray, and Krasnodar Kray into an Islamic state governed by Sharia law; assisted other jihadist VEOs involved in a transnational conflict against the West; and hoped to eventually become a state in the larger global caliphate.[54] Umarov's establishment of the CE followed severe Russian state repression. The assassination of ChRI Chief Mufti Akhmad Kadyrov in 2004, the assassination of visionary ChRI president Aslan Maskhadov in March 2005

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[52] "Caucasus Emirate – Mapping Militant Organizations," Stanford University, last modified April 11, 2014, accessed December 12, 2015, http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/255?highlight=caucasus+emirate.

[53] "World Almanac of Islamism: Russia," American Foreign Policy Council, July 11, 2013, accessed December 12, 2015, http://almanac.afpc.org/Russia.

[54] "Caucasus Emirate – Mapping Militant Organizations," Stanford University, last modified April 11, 2014, accessed December 12, 2015, http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/255?highlight=caucasus+emirate.

and his successor Abdul-Halim-haji Salamovich Sadulayev in June 2006, and the death of Umarov's new ChRI vice president and the Chechen wars' greatest general Shamil Basayev in July 2006 devastated the ChRI's ability to operate solely in Chechnya. Under this state repression and co-optation, the transnational brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action fostered in the interwar years finally resulted in scale shift.

After scale shift, the CE's operations focused regionally instead of strictly in Chechnya. Attacks in the Caucasus region increased in 2007 in equivalent numbers in Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Chechnya.[55] Continued high rates of attacks across the region in 2008 and 2009 demonstrate the strength and capability of the CE's guerrilla force, even under repression, and its regional orientation. As operations in Chechnya became more difficult, the organization expanded its attacks into previously stable and less defended neighboring states.[56] The CE's expanded scale included support to jihadist movements across the globe. In April 2010, the CE described its objectives as liberation of the Caucasus region, the Idel-Ural, and Western Siberia; assistance to Kazakhstan and Central Asian jihadists; destruction of the "laws of the infidel" in Central Asia and Afghanistan; liberation of Crimea; and uniting all Muslims from West Africa to India and East Asia into an Islamic Caliphate.[57] Participation in transnational conflict characterizes the new scale of Chechen VEO operations.

The scale shift also resulted in new transnational operational approaches using asymmetric attacks throughout the region and support to transnational conflicts. As part of a larger transnational conflict, the CE provides assistance to other "like-minded Salafist 'takfirist' jihadis, who assist each other in various ways—ideologically, politically, financially,

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[55] Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2011), 237.

[56] Ibid., 238-239.

[57] Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011), 7.

technologically, and operationally—and divide among themselves the labor and geography of the global jihad."[58] In pursuit of transnational goals, the CE participates in conflict in Syria and other global conflict areas, provides operational commanders to Al-Qaeda affiliated VEOs, and maintains training camps for foreign fighters.[59] Chechen participation in the Syrian civil war is the most recent and visible example of the CE's transnational scale and the interest of like-minded adherents to participate in transnational conflict. In mid-2012, Libyan and Chechen foreign fighters formed the Katibat al-Muhajireen in the rural areas around Latakia in northern Syria. In a process of brokerage in April 2013, the group combined with two other militant factions in Syria, the Katibat al-Khattab and the Katibat Jaish al-Muhajireen, to form the Jaish al-Muhajireen wa'l Ansar (the Army of Migrants and Supporters) under Chechen leader Abu Omar al-Shishani.[60] Abu Omar, whose true name is Tarkhan Batirashvili, is a former Georgian army sergeant and ethnic Chechen from Georgia's Pankisi Valley. That he identifies with the Chechen struggle through he is not a native of Chechnya demonstrates the diffusion of the CE's new transnational goals beyond Chechnya.[61]

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[58] Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011), 2.

[59] Gordon M. Hahn, *The Caucasus Emirate Mujahedin: Global Jihadism in Russia's North Caucasus and Beyond* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2014), 247.

[60] Murad al-Shishani Batal, "'Obliged to Unite Under One Banner': A Profile of Syria's Jaysh al-Muhajireen wa'l Ansar," *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 11, Issue 8 (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, April 19, 2013), accessed January 25, 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=40749&cHash=32b2880b2dfc5699dee18db4380f4e48#.VZoVimCHpVs.

[61] Mohanad Hage Ali, "Meet ISIS' new breed of Chechen militants," Al Arabiya News, August 31, 2014, accessed January 25, 2016, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/analysis/2014/08/31/Meet-ISIS-new-breed-of-Chechen-Militants-.html.

In 2013, Jaysh al-Muhajireen wa'l Ansar swore allegiance to the Caucasus Emirate.[62] This subordination to the CE came after Umarov's assassination by Russian security forces, demonstrating that state repression often further reinforces transnational scale shift. Umarov's successor, Aliskhab Khebekov, or "Ali Abu Muhammad al-Dagestani," has close ties with Al Qaeda and has reinforced his organization's subordination to central Al-Qaeda leadership.[63] In 2013, Chechen insurgents became more focused on a transnational agenda and less regionally oriented, though more disunified. In December 2013, Abu Omar al-Shishani defected to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) due to internal conflicts within Jaysh al-Muhajireen wa'l Ansar. He brought a faction of personally aligned Chechen fighters to ISIL and left Jaysh al-Muhajireen wa'l Ansar under Salakhuddin al-Shishani and Abdul Karim Krymsky. The group later deposed these leaders in June 2015 under a new majority of non-Chechens in Jaysh al-Muhajireen wa'l Ansar due to the effectiveness of Russian counterterrorism operations. The CE's ability to coordinate sub-groups from within the Caucasus region has weakened as a result. Effective Russian counterterrorism resulted in the deaths of the new CE Emir, Aliskhab Khebekov, and his successor, Ali Abu Muhammad, in 2015.[64] Despite these setbacks, Chechen fighters continue to participate in transnational conflict following the scale shift. The prevalence of ethnic Chechen fighters in ISIL's top ranks attracts other foreign fighters to participate in the Syrian conflict and demonstrates the power of the mechanisms of scale shift in expanding conflict from intra-state to transnational scales.

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[62] "Muhajireen Brigade," Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC), 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/muhajireen-brigade.

[63] Thomas Joscelyn, "State Department adds Islamic Caucasus Emirate Leader to Terrorist List," *The Long War Journal*, March 25, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/03/state-department-adds-islamic-caucasus-emirate-leader-to-terrorist-list.php.

[64] Joanna Paraszczuk, "JMA Split After Losing Its North Caucasian Majority & Amid Weak Caucasus Emirate," From Chechnya to Syria: Tracking Russian-speaking Foreign Fighters in Syria, June 12, 2015, accessed November 10, 2015, http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=23843.

Transnational Support to Chechen Insurgency

Correctly identifying the early stages of scale shift is important for preventing it. The theoretical mechanisms of scale shift are useful indications that military practitioners can use to understand which elements of an insurgency are likely to survive counterinsurgency, which may direct violence against US and Western interests, how transnational resources encourage scale shift, and individuals who coordinate the Tilly-Tarrow mechanisms of brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action. The Chechen insurgency's scale shift from intra-state to transnational insurgency required changes in resource bases to support its wider scale and to replace resources denied by effective Russian repression and co-optation of nationalists in Chechnya. In the First Chechen War, the Chechen militias had the advantage of interior lines, popular support, and a good supply of modern weapons and ammunition. As the war against Russian forces went on, Chechen fighters became less effective due to inadequate weapon and vehicle maintenance and reduced ammunition supplies, and likely were forced to combine their regular army units with ill-trained local militias. Chechen fighters relied on the local population to provide them with food, medical treatment, and mechanical repair.[65] These indigenous sources of supply proved adequate against the poorly-supported Russian military during the First Chechen War, but were expended and greatly reduced by the Second Chechen War with no way of replacing them indigenously. External support would be the only realistic way of regaining military capability between the First and Second Chechen Wars.

The main external source of logistical, financial, and training support came from transnational VEOs including Al-Qaeda, and extremists in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and to a lesser extent from Western Europe and the United States. As a consequence of transnational

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[65] Dodge Billingsley, *Fangs of the Lone Wolf: Chechen Tactics in the Russian-Chechen Wars 1994-2009* (West Midlands, UK: Helion & Company Limited, 2013), 168.

relationships with other VEOs and an inability to survive repression in Chechnya, the Chechen resistance increasingly relied on funding and material supply from foreign supporters linked to Al-Qaeda and other transnational VEOs. In the early 1990s, Al-Qaeda sent financial support to the Chechen militants through the Saudi Arabian government-backed Benevolence International Foundation, Inc. (BIF) for the purposes of funding operations, supporting persons seeking nuclear and chemical weapons for Al-Qaeda, and supplying Chechen separatists. Almost half (42%) of the BIF budget supported operations in Chechnya.[66] BIF provided recruits, doctors, medicine, money, an X-ray machine, "anti-mine boots", $685,000 in 2000 through nineteen wire transfers over four months, and likely other undiscovered material and financial support.[67] Russian sources claim that Al-Qaeda provided $25 million, four Stinger missiles, and 350 kilograms of plastic explosives, detonators, and medical supplies to Chechen fighters.[68] An Al-Qaeda-backed website supporting Khattab, Qoqaz.net, raised funds and recruits for the Chechen jihad beginning in 2000. Qoqaz.net and other web publications were created by Al-Qaeda affiliated Azzam Publications, which provided email services, communications equipment, expert advice, military items including NBC protective masks, night vision devices, and global position systems, currency, "monetary instruments," financial services, recruiters, fundraisers, and foot warmers for Shamil Basayev's guerrilla forces living in the mountains.[69] The increasing reliance upon foreign support contributed to the Chechen scale shift by encouraging Chechen militia factions to align more closely with radical Islamist supporters.

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[66] Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011), 5.

[67] Ibid., 4.

[68] Ibid., 6.

[69] Ibid., 5.

The CE's ability to survive Russian repression and co-optation in Chechnya is due to the external support bases available to a transnational VEO. International counterterrorism efforts attempted to repress this support, but they were too late to prevent scale shift. Since its formation in 2007, funding for the Caucasus Emirate has been increasingly constricted by international cooperation against terrorist groups. The US invasion of Afghanistan and disruption of Al-Qaeda significantly reduced Chechnya's external support. The United States and other states shut down several key international Islamic charities suspected of supporting Al-Qaeda after 9-11.[70] The November 2005 assassination in Dagestan of Sheikh Abu Umar al-Sayaf, the main conduit for Islamic charity funds from the Arab Gulf, significantly reduced funding for the Caucasus Emirate. Possible Russian FSB assassinations of facilitators like Musa Atayev, Doku Umarov's cousin, in Turkey in 2008 also cut funding from large diaspora communities from the North Caucasus region who previously funded the Caucasus Emirate, the sole remaining organized resistance element operating in Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia.[71] Despite these actions to cut the Caucasus Emirate's international funding sources, the CE continued to receive Middle Eastern funding through 2010, likely using migrants and foreign fighters traveling to the region.[72] Increasing reliance on foreign external support did not alienate nationalist resource bases because they were already exhausted or co-opted. The resilience of the CE's external support network results from its transnational goals. As repression and co-optation succeed at removing ties to Chechen nationalist objectives, the CE or its successor VEO will gain a stronger transnational identity.

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[70] Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2011), 245.

[71] Ibid., 244-245.

[72] Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011), 6.

Analysis of Chechen Scale Shift

Explanations of the CE's scale shift demonstrate the utility of mechanisms of internal disunity, repression, and co-optation in addition to the Tilly-Tarrow model's mechanisms of brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action. Udugov, the ChRI's Deputy Prime Minister, was exiled to the Middle East in 1999 due to internal disunity. As a Chechen insurgent who was supported by Islamic extremists abroad, his transnational outlook and the support he provided the insurgency shaped its transnational identity and goals. From his location abroad, he influenced and likely authored Umarov's declaration disbanding the ChRI and forming the Caucasus Emirate.

Former ChRI Foreign Minister Ilyas Akhmadov believes three reasons for the scale shift are that "the resistance found itself at a dead-end after Maskhadov's death; the cowardice and cynicism of the West offered no hope of support; and there was total disillusionment that any negotiated solution was possible. In contrast to…all these disappointments, Udugov's concept was simple and clear."[73] Akhmadov's assessment of the scale shift points to local conditions of disunity, repression, and co-optation, including "state failure, anarchy, violence, and the hopelessness that reigns in the North Caucasus," rather than Middle Eastern influence, as the mechanisms behind ChRI supporters in the region becoming more extremist and transnational.[74] Other explanations point to the practicality of transnational scale shift under effective state repression. Umarov determined by 2007 that the Chechen resistance needed to expand its scale to remain viable after Russia's assassination of the ChRI's key foreign fighter, Khattab, in 2002, severe reduction of foreign fighters after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and resulting decrease

[73] Ilyas Akhmadov and Miriam Lanskoy, *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 244.

[74] Ibid., 241-242.

in financial channels for foreign Islamic support.[75] These attempts at breaking the insurgency's transnational connections through repression came too late.

Russian attempts at co-optation similarly pacified only the nationalist factions in the insurgency. Islamist indoctrination and foreign relationships, inability to operate within Chechnya after Ramzan Kadyrov's co-optation, settlement with Russia, and election as President of the Russian Republic of Chechnya, and expansion of support networks outside Chechnya resulted in scale shift.[76] International efforts to repress the CE also attempted to address the Tilly-Tarrow model's mechanisms but failed to reverse the process of transnational scale shift. The Global War on Terror changed the Chechen operational environment by severing finance from the United States and Western Europe, toppling Afghanistan – the only government with official ties to the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria – ending vital training and money provided by Afghanistan, and providing more attractive wars for foreign fighters against US military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.[77] These repressive and co-optive efforts did not stop the Chechen insurgency from becoming transnational in 2007.

The Chechen insurgency's transformation from intra-state to transnational conflict, perpetuated by the CE's involvement in the current Syrian civil war, demonstrates the process of scale shift under state and international pressure. After achieving their initial goals of independence, Chechen unity collapsed. Renewed Russian pressure encouraged unity, but also created a desire for external assistance from transnational VEOs among some Chechen factions. Brokerage allowed the introduction of additional fighters and supporters, which created the relationships for diffusion of Al-Qaeda's transnational identity and objectives. Further episodes of

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[75] Elena Pokolava, *Chechnya's Terrorist Network: The Evolution of Terrorism in Russia's North Caucasus* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2015), 160.

[76] Ibid., 141-142.

[77] Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2011), 234-235.

Russian repression increased the need for brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action. Disunity and Russian co-optation of nationalist elements of the insurgency left no path for hard liners besides exit or scale shift. These mechanisms of the Tilly-Tarrow model, plus additional mechanisms peculiar to state pressure, demonstrate that counterinsurgency can accelerate scale shift to transnational conflict.

## Scale Shift in Somali Insurgency

The Somali insurgency's development over two decades demonstrates the way mechanisms of scale shift expand intra-state conflict to transnational extremism. Somali militant groups' transnational connections – explained by the Tilly-Tarrow mechanisms of brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action – increased under conditions of factional disunity, repression, and co-optation. Somalia's fractured Islamists initially formed coalitions and expanded their power relative to competing clan militias and weak Somali national governments through brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action. However, greater strength and more expansionist claims threatened the stronger Somali clans, Ethiopia, and the United States leading to two Ethiopian invasions, subsequent counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaigns, and effective repression and co-optation by states seeking to eliminate Islamist factions in Somalia. Under these conditions of repression, co-optation, and disunity, militants with transnational relationships leveraged external, escaped the intense competition with the state and other factions, and abandoned their original insurgencies' Islamist nationalist objectives in favor of transnational conflict.

### History of Somali Insurgency

Somalia's transnational scale shift began with intra-state conflict and the Islamist organization Al-Itihaad al-Islaamiyah (AIAI). AIAI was established in 1984 to overthrow the regime of Somali President Mohammad Siyad Barre and create a regional Islamic state in

Somalia and border areas of Ethiopia with majority Somali populations. The group initially attempted to create a separate Islamic state in peripheral areas of the southwestern Somali Gedo region, where General Aidid's militia defeated it in battle and forced it to relocate northward to the Puntland region. Once there, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) also defeated AIAI in battle and forced it to relocate southward again, where AIAI established an area of Islamist control in southwest Somalia near the border with Ethiopia. However, attempts at brokerage and coordinated action with Somali populations across the border, raids into Ethiopia, and hotel bombings claimed by AIAI's small Ethiopian faction led to its defeat by Ethiopian forces in 1996. After its decisive repression by Ethiopian forces, remaining AIAI factions trained in Afghanistan in Al-Qaeda training camps, hosted and supported Al-Qaeda operations in East Africa, and eventually formed the transnational core of the ICU and Al-Shabaab organizations.

Somali insurgency occurred in a fractured state characterized by disunity and struggles for power among factions, but also the desire for collective security, justice, and prosperity. The formation and destruction of AIAI, the first unifying Islamist group to successfully compete in the clan-based struggles following the Barre regime's collapse, demonstrate scale shift based on the Tilly-Tarrow model. However, its defeat and disintegration after the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 1996 illustrates the fragility of nationalist Islamist insurgencies desiring transnational expansion.

Clan-based insurgencies dominated the early years of Somali insurgency against the Barre regime, which rested on clan alliances based on patronage and punishment. In response to defeat in the 1978 Ethio-Somali War, Barre's clan-based coalition began to unravel into sub-clan resistance groups that expanded to entire clans. The Majertain sub-clan of Barre's Darod clan became the first to begin the struggle when a junta of Army officers attempted a coup in 1978.

Barre's intense repression on the Majertain resulted in the formation of the SSDF, a Majertain militia dedicated to subverting and overthrowing Barre.[78]

In 1979 the Somali National Movement (SNM), a Habr Awal and Habr Yunis sub-clan insurgent group, formed in northern Somalia in response to Barre's forced resettlement of Darod clan (Ogadeni sub-clan) refugees in Isaaq lands after the war. The SNM cause became popular among the entire Isaaq clan by 1980. The Hawiye clan supported the SNA, formed in 1987 in central Somalia, and the diaspora-based United Somali Congress (USC) arrived from Italy in 1989 to join the Hawiye uprising. Crucially, the Ogadeni sub-clan of the Darod clan formed the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) in 1987, leaving only the Marehan and Dolbohante sub-clans, controlling separate territories on Somalia's periphery, in support of Barre.[79] The diverse clan-based militias' loosely coordinated action succeeded in tearing down the regime in 1991 and Somalia returned to its clan-based militia competition.

Islamist insurgency further eroded Barre's support. In the 1980s, the SSDF and SNM struggled against the Barre regime alongside four Islamist groups, the Sufi Islamist-nationalist groups Waxda Al-Shabaab al-Islaami, Jama'at al Ahl al-Islami, and Munadamat al-Nahdah al-Islaamiyah, and the Wahhabi group Jamaaca Islaamiyah. In 1984, Waxda Al-Shabaab al-Islaami joined Jamaaca Islaamiyah to form AIAI.[80] This merger allowed the combined groups to increase their control of territory in southern Somalia. The merger included diffusion of Jamaaca Islaamiyah's Wahhabi ideology across the organization, brokerage redefining mutual goals to expand territory governed by sharia in Somalia and form a strong Islamic state in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia), especially the traditionalist Takfiri version

[78] Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland* (London: Progressio, 2008), 39-46.

[79] Ibid., 39-46.

[80] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 15-17.

emphasizing accusations of religious apostasy to the less devout.[81] The merger – really a loose brokerage among Islamist strongmen in sub-clan militias – increased the power of AIAI and made it the primary Islamist organization in Somalia. Coordinated action among sub-groups within AIAI increased their power steadily from AIAI's formation in 1984.

The Barre regime's dismemberment by independent but loosely coordinated resistance groups throughout the traditional Somali clan and Islamist groups returned Somalia to a state of disunity and factional competition.[82] Competition over Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, congealed into battle lines between Hawiye clan warlords Mohammed Farah Aidid and Ali Mahdi Mohammed.[83] Their fighting in Somalia's capital and main port city disrupted international aid distribution and resulted in the UN peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance mission UNOSOM I from April 1991 to March 1993.[84] Intensified fighting in Mogadishu resulted in UNOSOM II, an expansion of the UN mission to peace enforcement, militia disarmament, and factional reconciliation from March 1993 to March 1995.[85]

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[81] Sunguta West, "Somalia's ICU and its Roots in al-Ittihad al-Islami," *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 4, Issue 15, The Jamestown Foundation, August 4, 2006, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=854&no_cache=1#.Vu12TsdxJU0.

[82] J. Peter Pham, *State Collapse, Insurgency, and Counterinsurgency Lessons from Somalia* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College Press, 2013), 10.

[83] Roland Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War: Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen in Somalia," Sciences Po: The Paris Institute of Political Studies, March 2011, 12-13, accessed January 30, 2016, http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/art_RM2.pdf.

[84] "United Nations Operation in Somalia I," United Nations Department of Public Information, 2003, accessed January 30, 2016, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unosomi.htm.

[85] "United Nations Operation in Somalia II," United Nations Department of Public Information, 2003, accessed January 30, 2016, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unosom2.htm.

Joining the competition, AIAI's loose coalition of less than 700 Islamist fighters sought strength through solidarity with other Islamists and clan militias after losing several battles.[86] Elements of AIAI fought alongside Darod militias and lost against Hawiye militias commanded by Mohammed Farah Aidid at El Arare in the Gedo Region in April 1991. They fled north to Puntland, where the SSDF defeated them in 1991 to prevent their threat to an independent state of Somaliland. To survive, AIAI fled back to southern Somalia through the Ogaden region to other Darod (Marehan) clan territory in the Gedo region of southwestern Somalia and established local roots among the populations that previously demonstrated the most loyalty to President Barre.[87] The loose coalition of Islamists coordinating under the title of AIAI fell into disarray following its inability to compete against the organized clan militias. The group split into two main factions in 1992, the militant Al-Itisaam bil Kataab wal-Sunnah and the charity-focused AIAI. Many individual affiliates pursued their own ways of supporting the Islamist cause.[88] After AIAI's failed experiment in Islamist-nationalist competition, those groups that remained militant focused on transnational ties to global jihadists. Gedo-based Islamist militants under Al-Itisaam bil Kataab wal-Sunnah leader Hassan Abdullah Hersi al-Turki hosted Al-Qaeda (AQ) veterans, supported by Sudan-based Osama bin-Laden and exporting global jihad after their victory in the Soviet-Afghan War.[89] Other factions, including Somali veterans of the Soviet-Afghan War,

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[86] Roland Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War: Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen in Somalia," Sciences Po: The Paris Institute of Political Studies, March 2011, 12-13, accessed January 30, 2016, http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/art_RM2.pdf.

[87] International Crisis Group, "Somalia's Islamists," *Africa Report*, No. 100 (International Crisis Group: 12 December 2005), 4-6.

[88] Roland Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War: Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen in Somalia," Sciences Po: The Paris Institute of Political Studies, March 2011, 12-13, accessed January 30, 2016, http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/art_RM2.pdf.

[89] "Al Ittihad Al Islamiya – Mapping Militant Organizations," Stanford University, last modified July 18, 2012, accessed January 20, 2016, https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/99#note41.

fought against UNOSOM II forces in Mogadishu from 1993 to 1995 and participated in the Battle of Mogadishu against US forces.[90] During this time of Islamist failure to sustain expansion based on brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action, new mechanisms of transnational relationships and resources and transnational goal diffusion provided militants a way to survive and gain strength in Somalia.

Ethiopia's unease increased as it saw the transnationally oriented Islamist threat grow in the Gedo region along its southern border. Cross-border attacks by AIAI military commander Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys began in 1991 as the lack of government repression allowed AIAI to focus on expansion into the Ethiopian Ogaden region.[91] Somali Islamist militants affiliated with AIAI continued raids into Ethiopian territory throughout the mid-1990s.[92] Hotel bombings in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa and the attempted assassination of Ethiopia's Minister of Transportation drew an Ethiopian military response.[93] The Ethiopian army invaded Gedo and attacked AIAI bases in Luuq and Bulo Hawa in 1996, culminating in the Battle of Dolow City, also called the battle of Hilac Wayne. Future Islamist leaders participating in this battle included AIAI military commander and future Islamic Courts Union (ICU) leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, Al-Itisaam bil Kataab wal-Sunnah leader Hassan Abdullah Hersi al-Turki, and future Al-

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[90] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 20-21.

[91] International Crisis Group, "Somalia's Islamists," *Africa Report*, No. 100 (International Crisis Group: December 12, 2005), 8-9.

[92] Sunguta West, "Somalia's ICU and its Roots in al-Ittihad al-Islami," *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 4, Issue 15, The Jamestown Foundation, August 4, 2006, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=854&no_cache=1#.Vu12TsdxJU0.

[93] "Al Ittihad Al Islamiya – Mapping Militant Organizations," Stanford University, last modified July 18, 2012, accessed January 20, 2016, https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/99#note41.

Shabaab leaders Aden Hashi Farah Ayro and Mukhtar Robow. Between twelve and eighty foreign fighters from Al-Qaeda, hosted by Soviet-Afghan War veterans in AIAI, also fought in the Battle of Hilac Wayne.[94]

The Battle of Hilac Wayne proved to be a decisive blow against AIAI. The international community brokered a clan coalition installing the Transitional National Government at the Somali National Peace Conference in Arta, Djibouti, in April-May 2000.[95] The Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC), a Mogadishu-based insurgent group composed of Hussein Farah Aidid's Habr Gedir sub-clan (Hawiye clan) and Mohammed Omar Habeeb's ("Mohammed Dheere") Abgal sub-clan (Hawiye clan) with its two militias of approximately 800 fighters, opposed this dysfunctional attempt at a central state government.[96] Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, the AIAI military commander, retired to the Galguduud region and then to Mogadishu to study Islam.[97] Hassan al-Turki continued to host Al-Qaeda fighters in southwest Somalia and supported these militants as they prepared for and executed the August 7, 1998, attacks on US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, as part of a transnational jihadist movement.[98] Aden Hashi Farah Ayro and other AIAI fighters traveled to Afghanistan where they

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[94] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

[95] "Somali Peace Process," African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), accessed January 20, 2016, http://amisom-au.org/about-somalia/somali-peace-process/.

[96] J. Peter Pham, *State Collapse, Insurgency, and Counterinsurgency Lessons from Somalia* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College Press, 2013), 13.

[97] Sunguta West, "Somalia's ICU and its Roots in al-Ittihad al-Islami," *Terrorism Monitor,* Volume 4, Issue 15, The Jamestown Foundation, August 4, 2006, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=854&no_cache=1#.Vu12TsdxJU0.

[98] "Al Ittihad Al Islamiya – Mapping Militant Organizations," Stanford University, last modified July 18, 2012, accessed January 20, 2016, https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/99#note41.

trained in Al-Qaeda camps and reportedly met Osama bin-Laden.[99] Sheikh Mukhtar Robow returned to his Rahanweyn clan (Leysan sub-clan) area and continued as a militia leader. By 1998, AIAI dissolved under the combined pressures of external state repression by Ethiopia and internal disunity and competition against clan militias and opted for a long-term strategy of Islamic education rather than continued militancy.[100] The Tilly-Tarrow model's mechanisms of scale shift – brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action – ceased to apply under effective state action in Somalia's dysfunctional militia competition. Instead, under conditions of effective counterinsurgency, the mechanisms of disunity, repression, and co-optation underlie the scale shift.

Because of many changes in the volatile Somali operational environment, AIAI's goals shifted several times between its creation in 1984 and its effective dissolution in 1996. Alongside multiple clan-based insurgent groups, AIAI's primary goal was to overthrow the Barre regime.[101] After Barre's overthrow, the group attempted to establish territories in the Ethiopian Ogaden and Darod clan areas where it could establish an Islamic state under sharia. This goal remained central, although several key factions of Soviet-Afghan War veterans supported transnational jihad and hosted foreign jihadists, until AIAI's defeat by Ethiopian forces in 1996. After defeat, AIAI changed its goals to longer-term societal preparation for Islamic rule through charity and proselytizing ("dawa"). The AIAI factions with transnational ties continued to pursue Islamist goals through militancy under the new name of Al-Itisaam bil Kataab wal-Sunnah, and some

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[99] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 22.

[100] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 61.

[101] Sunguta West, "Somalia's ICU and its Roots in al-Ittihad al-Islami," *Terrorism Monitor,* Volume 4, Issue 15, The Jamestown Foundation, August 4, 2006, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=854&no_cache=1#.Vu12TsdxJU0.

traveled to training camps in Afghanistan to gain knowledge and experience to increase Islamist militant capacity to further pursue trans-regional militancy from the Somali safe-haven.

Formation and Destruction of the Islamic Courts Union

The Islamic Courts Union (ICU) was a national and later transnational Islamist organization that formed in 2000 from the brokerage of eleven sharia courts and their associated militias to establish an Islamic state in Somalia and expand it regionally throughout East Africa.[102] The ICU leadership included several key AIAI leaders, and its powerful militia, the Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (Al-Shabaab), survived the Ethiopian invasion that destroyed the ICU in 2006. Al-Shabaab subsequently cast itself as the vanguard for religious-nationalist resistance against the Ethiopian occupation and pursued a transnational agenda and alignment with Al-Qaeda as an East African regional affiliate organization.

Like AIAI, the ICU became more transnationally oriented during its struggle for power among competing factions in Somalia. The initial ICU goal was simply to establish a common legal jurisdiction for sharia in Mogadishu under the protection of Islamic court militias. As the ICU gained power through brokerage with other clan and Islamic court militias, transnational Islamists in the ICU, including former AIAI members and alumni from Afghan training camps, marginalized the ICU's more nationally focused leaders. The ICU publicly touted its transnational ambitions and attacked the TFG to unite Somalia into an Islamic state. The ICU maintained this goal until its military defeat by Ethiopian forces in 2006.

The warlord system gradually collapsed between 2002 and 2006 because it proved incapable of providing reliable security. Somali investors contracted their business security, which fractured the warlord militias through competition for contracts. By 2005, fourteen militias

[102] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 33-34.

controlled separate parts of Mogadishu with relatively smaller and weaker militias than before: between fifty to one thousand men, compared with the six thousand men under Mohammed Farah Aidid. Both business elites and Somali citizens increasingly saw the militias as corrupt, ill-disciplined, and unable to maintain control beyond several blocks, which restricted business and daily life.[103] Islamists stepped into the power vacuum by offering less corrupt security forces, a predictable sharia legal code, and a larger legal jurisdiction and security area across sub-clan boundaries.[104] Mogadishu businessmen refused to pay militia taxes in 1999 and sub-contracted security to the Islamic courts, often with the same militiamen used previously by the clan militias.[105] The Islamic courts provided an alternative for justice and security of business, private, and social interests.[106]

The most powerful sharia courts in Somalia from 2004 to 2006 were the four courts of Ifka Halane, Shircole, Towfiq, and Sii Sii. Al-Shabaab members were highly active in the two most powerful courts, the Shircole and the Ifka Halane.[107] The ICU supported Abokour Omar Adane's business militia in clashes with United States-sponsored warlord Bashir Raghe Shirar that began in January 2006 and consumed Mogadishu until the ICU gained total control of the city in June 2006. The United States, eager to balance Islamist power and aware of al-Shabaab's ties with Al-Qaeda, provided financial support to a new alliance of Somali warlords called the Alliance for Peace Restoration and Counter Terrorism (APRCT) in an attempt to gain US counterterrorism

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[103] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 44.

[104] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.

[105] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 44.

[106] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 32-33.

[107] Ibid., 33-34.

sponsorship.

The ICU's Al-Shabaab militia won a series of battles against the warlords resulting in ICU control of the El Maan and El Adde ports in Mogadishu, Eisley airport, Baledoogle airport, Walaweyne city, and the largest prize, Kismayo, on 24 September 2006.[108] The ICU directly opposed the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and attacked Baidoa in earnest on 19 December 2006 to defeat the TFG and ENDF forces and to establish control over central and southern Somalia. Ethiopia responded with a counterattack against the Islamic Courts' northern flank at the town of Bandiiradley and the ICU and Al-Shabaab forces collapsed. Ethiopian and TFG forces began to clear Mogadishu on 28 December. Remaining ICU and Al-Shabaab fighters retreated to Kismayo and established a defense at Jilib. Defeated at the Battle of Jilib on 01 January 2007, the ICU abandoned Kismayo and dispersed into rural Somalia and across the border into Kenya. US airstrikes injured several leaders, including Al-Shabaab leader Ayro, and the ICU dissolved.[109] The subsequent period involved Ethiopian support to counterinsurgency and US support to willing proxy militias. [110] The ICU's Islamist agenda, the affiliation of key ICU members with the 1998 Al-Qaeda attacks on US embassies in East Africa, and the ICU's hosting of Al-Qaeda foreign fighters made it a key threat group to the United States following 9-11 and the US policy shift to preemptive attack on Al-Qaeda affiliated Islamist groups.

The US Department of State retroactively designated AIAI as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2001 for its participation in the 1998 embassy bombings, allowing US Department of Defense and Central Intelligence Agency counterterrorism forces to begin operations in Somalia. Since that time, information about AIAI factions supporting Al-Qaeda

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[108] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 34-40.

[109] Ibid., 46-47.

[110] J. Peter Pham, *State Collapse, Insurgency, and Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Somalia* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Press, 2013), 14-16.

indicated that transnational involvement in terrorism had evolved from attacks committed in the name of Somali irredentism to transnational attacks. The 1996 AIAI hotel bombings in Ethiopia, Somali logistical support to the foreign Al-Qaeda operatives that attacked US embassies in East Africa in 1998, Somali extremists' 2002 Mombasa hotel bombing and attack on an Israeli charter plane, and the foiled 2004 aircraft and truck attack attempt on the US Embassy in Nairobi demonstrated the spread of jihadist leanings of Islamist factions within AIAI.[111] This precipitated the "Shadow War" period of US clandestine involvement in targeting Al-Qaeda advisors and affiliated Somali fighters using Somali warlords and Ethiopian intelligence assets.

From 2002 to 2006, the United States sought proxy forces to defeat the ICU and its more militant wing, Al-Shabaab, in Somalia. During this period the remaining clan militias proved a willing counter to ICU strength allowing US counterterrorism operations to enable competing Somali militias, render and interrogate foreign fighters, and conduct targeted strikes to kill former AIAI leaders.[112] The Shadow War period resulted in the rendition of an estimated eight Al-Qaeda figures from Somalia, but ended after the ICU took control of Mogadishu in June 2006 from warlords cooperating with US counterterrorism operations.[113] Remarkably, it also presented missed opportunities for co-optation by security forces. In 2002, the United States missed an opportunity to recruit the ICU leader and Al-Shabaab senior mentor, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, as a foreign intelligence asset because at that time he was not considered to have enough power.[114]

In 2006, the ICU established control of Mogadishu and southern Somalia, and then

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[111] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69-71.

[112] Sean Naylor, *Relentless Strike: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 326-327.

[113] Ibid., 333-334.

[114] Ibid., 338.

marched on Baidoa to challenge the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). After negotiations in Khartoum failed to broker a deal between the TFG and the ICU, Ethiopia invaded Somalia in December 2006. After nine days of fighting, the ICU surrendered.[115] Direct US support to the Ethiopian invasion included a January 7, 2006, AC-130 gunship strike on a column of retreating ICU and Al-Qaeda in East Africa (AQEA) fighters near Ras Kamboni in southern Somalia, wounding the ICU's al-Shabaab militia leader Aden Hashi Ayro. Strikes in the following two weeks resulted in the wounding and capture of Ahmed Madobe, a deputy to the ICU leader Hassan Turki, and the death of eight militants. However, Ethiopian and US goals diverged over separate objectives, scope of counterterrorism operations, and methods.[116]

The Ethiopian military occupied Somalia from 2006 to 2009 to bolster the TFG and to conduct counterinsurgency against Islamists, chasing down the remnants of the ICU. Heavy-handed counterinsurgency operations, human rights violations, TFG corruption, and cultural Somali-Ethiopian enmity created conditions for Al-Shabaab to gain legitimacy, momentum, and power.[117] US intelligence estimates concluded that up to 300 foreign fighters arrived in Somalia in summer 2007 and an additional several hundred trained in two militant camps near Ras Kamboni, Somalia.[118] Two years later on 03 March 2008, US forces attempted a surgical strike on senior AQEA leader Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, but failed to kill him due to procedural

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[115] "Islamic Courts Union – Mapping Militant Organizations," Stanford University, last modified July 18, 2012, accessed January 20, 2016, https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/107.

[116] Sean Naylor, *Relentless Strike: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 336-337.

[117] Paula Cristina Roque, "Somalia: Understanding Al-Shabaab," Institute for Security Studies, June 3, 2009, accessed January 20, 2016, https://www.africaportal.org/dspace/articles/somalia-understanding-al-shabaab.

[118] Sean Naylor, *Relentless Strike: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 337.

difficulties. However, they succeeded in killing Al-Shabaab leader Ayro on 01 May 2008.[119]

Al-Shabaab and Scale Shift

After the defeat of its predecessor organizations, AIAI and ICU, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (Al-Shabaab) remained as the only Islamist faction conducting insurgency in Somalia. Al-Shabaab's survival is due to its transnational outlook and Al-Qaeda affiliation. Its current pursuit of transnational extremism and terrorist attacks are aimed at establishing an Islamic state in Somalia as part of a larger international Islamic Caliphate. Al-Shabaab derived its core leadership from ICU militia members, most with training or battlefield experience with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, including some former members of AIAI. After significant territorial gains against the TFG and supporting Ethiopian forces between 2006 and 2009, an African Union military intervention (AMISOM) rolled back key Al-Shabaab areas of control, leaving the organization in control of large but remote areas in central and northeastern Somalia. Al-Shabaab responded by deepening its ties with Al-Qaeda, returning to asymmetric terrorist attacks against soft targets, and complex terrorist attacks against foreign civilians in AMISOM-contributing states.

Al-Shabaab established itself in 2005 as a youth militia enforcing sharia court justice. By 2006, Al-Shabaab had emerged as the transnationally aligned element of the larger Somalia-focused ICU Islamist movement. Its leadership core consisted of alumni jihadists from the counter-Soviet insurgency in Afghanistan with key Al-Qaeda contacts and an interest in transnational participation beyond the struggle for power within Somalia.[120] When Ethiopia

[119] Sean Naylor, *Relentless Strike: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 339.

[120] Roland Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War: Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen in Somalia," Sciences Po: The Paris Institute of Political Studies, March 2011, 12-13, accessed January 30, 2016, http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/art_RM2.pdf.

invaded Somalia at the request of Somalia's fledgling transitional government, it quickly defeated the less capable ICU. Much of the ICU fled to neighboring countries, but Al-Shabaab continued fighting and withdrew in good order to southern Somalia.[121] Part of Al-Shabaab's legitimacy came from the fact that its leadership never fled Somalia and survived the Ethiopian invasion that killed its parent organization.[122]

Al-Shabaab reorganized and led an insurgency against the Ethiopian occupation using asymmetric guerrilla operations, assassinations, and terrorism. The group quickly expanded from around four hundred fighters to several thousand by 2008. Al-Shabaab leaders including Ayro publicly declared support for Al-Qaeda. The US Department of State designated Al-Shabaab as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in February 2008. Under intense internal and external pressure from the TFG, the new African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the United States, Al-Shabaab continued to strengthen its transnational relationships and publicly vowed in 2010 to connect its Islamist jihad in the Horn of Africa with Osama bin Laden's global jihadi struggle.[123] Al-Shabaab coordinated suicide bombings on crowds watching the World Cup games at several bars in Kampala, Uganda, on 11 July 2010.[124] On 09 February 2012, seven months after this attack, Al-Shabaab's leader Mukhtar Ahmad Godane "Abu Zubayr" received approval from

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[121] Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," *CFR Backgrounders*, Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650.

[122] Paula Cristina Roque, "Somalia: Understanding Al-Shabaab," Institute for Security Studies, June 3, 2009, accessed January 20, 2016, https://www.africaportal.org/dspace/articles/somalia-understanding-al-shabaab.

[123] Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," *CFR Backgrounders*, Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650.

[124] Matt Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity? A Report of the CSIS Africa Program* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2014), 8.

Al-Qaeda leadership for an official merger and declared his loyalty to Al-Qaeda Amir Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri.[125]

Al-Shabaab operations under the ICU consisted of conventional military victories against clan militias in Mogadishu, culminating in spectacular tactical victories in June and July 2006 and complete control of Mogadishu. Following the Ethiopian invasion and occupation from 2006 to 2009, Al-Shabaab transformed itself into a guerrilla army operating out of southern Somalia and centered on Ras Kamboni. Al-Shabaab resumed conventional operations against Ethiopian forces and gained significant territory in 2008 and 2009, including the lucrative port of Kismayo, the port city of Merka, and the Bay region capital of Baidoa.[126] Increasingly capable AMISOM forces defeated Al-Shabaab attacks and gradually secured key cities in central and southern Somalia and strengthened lines of communication from Mogadishu to Kismayo along the coast and to Baidoa in the interior of central Somalia. Al-Shabaab responded to operational setbacks by changing its strategy to maintaining the Jaysh al-Usra in rural central Somalia focused on asymmetric attacks and avoiding battle with AMISOM forces, the Amniyat conducting terrorism and intelligence collection in areas controlled by AMISOM and Somalia National Army forces, and terrorist cells conducting complex attacks in AMISOM-contributing states in East Africa.[127]

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[125] Ayman al-Zawahiri and Ahmed Abdi Godane 'Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr,' "Glad Tidings by the Two Sheikhs: Sheikh Abu al-Zubayr Amir of the Shabaab al-Mujahideen Movement and Amir Ayman al-Zawahiri," As-Sahab Foundation for Media Production, translated by the Global Islamic Media Front Language and Translation Department, February 2012, accessed January 20, 2016, https://archive.org/details/Abu_al-Zubayr-al-Zawahiri.

[126] Paula Cristina Roque, "Somalia: Understanding Al-Shabaab," Institute for Security Studies, June 3, 2009, accessed January 20, 2016, https://www.africaportal.org/dspace/articles/somalia-understanding-al-shabaab.

[127] Matt Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity? A Report of the CSIS Africa Program* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2014), 6.

Al-Shabaab lost significant territorial control to AMISOM forces from 2010 to 2016. AMISOM maintained 22,126 military forces through 2015 from Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Sierra Leone compared to Al-Shabaab's several thousand fielded militant forces. AMISOM forces captured the critical city of Kismayo in October 2012.[128] This port city at the mouth of the acacia-forested Juba River provided the majority of Al-Shabaab's operating funds through charcoal trade taxation. In 2014, counterterrorism efforts in Somalia pushed Al-Shabaab out of large rural areas in central and south Somalia including the key port city of Barawe and degraded Al-Shabaab's operational area in Puntland's Golis Mountains. A US military strike on 26 August 2014 killed Al-Shabaab Emir Godane and Amniyat leader Tahlil, leaving the organization in crisis.[129]

However, Godane's organizational changes to survive an expected AMISOM offensive by shifting to an asymmetric strategy and terrorism allowed Al-Shabaab to survive. Godane's restructuring devolved command and control to trusted regional commanders, developed the Amniyat's ability to conduct a long campaign of assassination, terrorism, and intimidation in AMISOM controlled territory, and strengthened Al-Shabaab's relationships with transnational VEOs, including opportunities for foreign training and battlefield experience in other regions.[130] On 06 September, a week after Godane's death, the Shura Council named Ahmed Omar ("Abu

[128] "Resolution 2124 (2013)," United Nations Security Council, November 12, 2013, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2124(2013); Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," *CFR Backgrounders*, Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650.

[129] United States Department of State – Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2014," (Washington, DC: United States Department of State Publication, June 2015), 47.

[130] Matt Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity? A Report of the CSIS Africa Program* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2014), 11.

Ubeida") as the new emir of Al-Shabaab and promised a renewed wave of terrorist attacks against AMISOM troops and their states of origin.[131]

Al-Shabaab attacks employ increasingly sophisticated complex asymmetric attacks in Somalia using combinations of multiple suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (SVBIED), suicide infantry assaults using small arms and suicide vests, and grenades.[132] Attacks at Nairobi's Westgate mall in 2014 and Garissa University College in Kenya in 2015 demonstrate increased emphasis on transnational terrorism. Attack trends in early 2016 indicate further developments of Al-Shabaab's capabilities to conduct complex attacks using multiple asymmetric weapons systems, like the January 2016 attack on a beachside restaurant and hotel in Mogadishu, and technological advances in disguising IEDs, such as the February 2016 laptop blast on Daalo Airlines Flight 159 traveling from Mogadishu to Djibouti.[133]

Somali Involvement with ISIS

In late 2015, Al-Shabaab suffered from highly publicized defections to ISIS, military pressure from AMISOM and US surgical strike operations, and erosion of legitimacy as the Federal Government of Somalia (FSG). However, Al-Shabaab leadership has made clear that the organization remains loyal to Al-Qaeda and rejects any Somalis who support ISIS. In late 2015, ISIS released numerous propaganda videos courting Al-Shabaab leaders and rank-and-file

[131] Hamza Mohamed, "Somalia's al-Shabaab Names New Leader," Al-Jazeera, September 6, 2014, accessed February 23, 2016, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/09/somalia-al-shabab-names-new-leader-20149617410271106.html.

[132] United States Department of State – Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2014," (Washington, DC: United States Department of State Publication, June 2015), 47-49.

[133] Robyn Kriel and Susanna Capelouto, "Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for Somalia in-flight jet blast," CNN, February 13, 2016, accessed March 10, 2016, http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/13/africa/somalia-plane-bomb-al-shabaab/.

members to abandon Al-Qaeda and rebrand as an ISIS affiliate.[134] Indeed, there appears to be a high-stakes struggle between Al-Qaeda and ISIS for leadership of the global jihad movement, with each competing for loyalties in Somalia.[135] Although this caused several small defections, Al-Shabaab has maintained its loyalty to Al-Qaeda and purged its organization of ISIS sympathizers, likely keeping others in line through intimidation.

Pro-ISIS elements within Somalia have currently claimed no operations in East Africa. However, a small number of Somalis from diaspora communities appear to be actively participating in the Syrian civil war. In February 2015, three Somalis of Swedish citizenship, out of an estimated twenty diaspora Somalis fighting with ISIS, died in fighting near Dabiq, Syria.[136] This small number of foreign fighters is insignificant compared to more than 20,000 foreign fighters likely participating in the Syrian conflict, indicating that Al-Shabaab's control of its transnational franchise and rejection of support to ISIS remain significant factors keeping Al-Shabaab's struggle transnational, but decidedly regional in its ambitions.

Despite Al-Shabaab's heavy crackdown on Somalis joining ISIS, several key individuals have pledged loyalty to the competing transnational VEO. Abdul Qadir Mumin, an Al-Shabaab spiritual leader, pledged allegiance to ISIS in October 2015 in an audiotaped declaration calling on all Muslims to do the same.[137] His allegiance brought an estimated 20-100 sympathetic

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[134] Thomas Joscelyn, "Shabaab's leadership fights Islamic State's attempted expansion in East Africa," *The Long War Journal*, October 26, 2015, accessed February 23, 2016, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/10/shabaab-leadership-fights-islamic-state-expansion.php.

[135] Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, "Terrorist Tug-of-War: ISIS and al Qaeda Struggle for al Shabaab's Soul," *Foreign Affairs*, October 8, 2015, accessed February 23, 2016, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/kenya/2015-10-08/terrorist-tug-war.

[136] "Somalia: Three Somali jihadists fighting for ISIS killed in Syria," Horseed Media, February 3, 2015, accessed February 23, 2016, https://horseedmedia.net/2015/02/03/somalia-three-somali-jihadists-fighting-for-isis-killed-in-syria/.

[137] Thomas Joscelyn, "Shabaab's leadership fights Islamic State's attempted expansion in East Africa," *The Long War Journal*, October 26, 2015, accessed February 23, 2016,

fighters operating in Puntland's Golis Mountains to the ISIS banner.[138] This defection seems to be an exception to the tight control Al-Shabaab has over Islamist militancy in East Africa.

Although these defections to a rival transnational organization increase tensions inside Al-Shabaab at a particularly vulnerable time after the September 2014 death of its authoritarian leader Ahmad Godane, the rift may be forcing reaffirmation of loyalty to Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda among its decentralized factional network. Correspondence between Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri and Godane before Godane's death in September 2014 included his thoughts on the subject of ISIS' attempt to encourage international jihadist solidarity. Godane saw attempts to compete with Al-Qaeda at the international level as contrary to the Muslim obligation to restore a unified Caliphate that spanned the entire Muslim community. Zawahiri further endorsed Sheikh Abu Ubaydah Ahmad Umar as the new Al-Shabaab emir following Godane's "martyrdom."[139] In October 2015, Al-Muhajiroun, an offshoot of the Al-Hijra jihadist organization operating in Kenya and Tanzania, reaffirmed loyalty to Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda and disappointment with ISIS's attempts to divide the mujahideen.[140]

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http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/10/shabaab-leadership-fights-islamic-state-expansion.php.

[138] "Cell of Somalia's Shebab in Galgala Mountains Declare Loyalty to the Islamic State," Diplomat News Network, October 22, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://diplomat.so/2015/10/22/cell-of-somalias-shebab-in-galgala-mountains-declare-loyalty-to-the-islamic-state/; "Somalia: Pledged Allegiance to ISIS. Sign of Al-Shabaab's Weakness," Geeska Afrika News, October 23, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.geeskaafrika.com/somalia-pledged-allegiance-to-isis-sign-of-al-shabaabs-weakness/11585/#sthash.dPsEGql1.dpuf.

[139] Thomas Joscelyn, "Shabaab's leadership fights Islamic State's attempted expansion in East Africa," *The Long War Journal*, October 26, 2015, accessed February 23, 2016, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/10/shabaab-leadership-fights-islamic-state-expansion.php.

[140] Christopher Anzalone, "From Al-Shabab to the Islamic State: The Bay'a of 'Abd al-Qadir Mu'min and Its Implications," Jihadology.net, October 29, 2015, accessed March 10, 2016, http://jihadology.net/2015/10/29/guest-post-from-al-shabab-to-the-islamic-state-the-baya-of-abd-al-qadir-mumin-and-its-implications/.

In late 2015 and early 2016, Al-Shabaab has turned its internal purges on ISIS defectors in Somalia and emphasized the nationalist aspects of its transnational organization. On 05 December 2015, Al-Shabaab assassinated Mohammed Makkawi Ibrahim, a Sudanese foreign fighter who swore allegiance to ISIS after years of enjoying safe haven in Somalia after his assassination of USAID diplomat John Granville in 2008.[141] In December 2015, an American foreign fighter in Somalia, "Abdul Malik Jones," surrendered to a local Barawe police patrol claiming to be fleeing Al-Shabaab's death sentence on all fighters that pledged allegiance to ISIS.[142]

Transnational Support to Somali Insurgency

The importance of transnational networks cannot be overstated as a mechanism underlying the Somali insurgent scale shift. The informal networks of Afghanistan veterans, Islamist group alumni, and individual Al-Qaeda connections predated and resulted in Al-Shabaab's creation.[143] Leaders of the earlier Somali Islamist organization, AIAI had limited transnational ties and a clear focus on local Somali issues. Several leaders, like AIAI military commander and former Colonel Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, previously served in the Somali armed forces under the Barre regime. In late 1990, on the verge of the regime's collapse and Somali civil war, six Somali veterans returned from the Soviet-Afghan War. They persuaded AIAI by the end of 1990 to take up arms like other clan factions vying for power. After several

[141] "Sudanese USAID Employee assassin killed by Al-Shabaab in Somalia," Bar-Kulan.com, December 7, 2015, accessed February 23, 2016, http://www.bar-kulan.com/2015/12/07/sudanese-usaid-employee-assassin-killed-by-al-shabaab-in-somalia/.

[142] "US Fighter Flees al-Shabaab After ISIL Allegiance Row," Al Jazeera, December 7, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/al-shabaab-fighter-flees-group-isil-row-151207181325944.html.

[143] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6.

military setbacks, AIAI established sharia administration in the Gedo region between Luuq, Dolow, and Buulo Haawa, and around Ras Kamboni in the lower Juba region. [144] Aweys Al-Qaeda, based out of Sudan, supported AIAI and provided foreign fighters. Ethiopia captured as many as eighty Al-Qaeda fighters and killed at least twelve alongside AIAI fighters at the Battle of Dolow City in August 1996. As AIAI dissolved, Hassan Turki hosted foreign fighters for attacks against US embassies in East Africa.[145] Both Ayro and the future Al-Shabaab leader Godane traveled to Afghanistan for training before the American invasion in 2001.[146] Their identification with the global Islamic jihad came to dominate the transnational outlook of future Somali Islamist organizations as competition and state repression whittled away the nationalists.

Soon after the ICU's creation, transnationally focused members marginalized and replaced its initial moderate nationalist leadership. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmad, the first ICU leader, initially impressed the international community as a pragmatic moderate willing to negotiate with the TFG. He soon lost an internal ICU power struggle with Aweys, who became the head of the ICU and installed his Al-Qaeda affiliated protégés Ayro and al-Turki as ICU militia leaders. Aweys handed operational command of Al-Shabaab to Ayro in 2006, but remained the group's spiritual advisor and mentor to senior leaders until his defection to the Somali National Army in protest of Godane's leadership. A US missile strike killed Ayro in May 2008, leaving Al-Shabaab leadership to Ahmed Abdi Godane ("Abu Zubayr"). Godane marginalized or purged the more nationalist leaders in Al-Shabaab, including Ibrahim Haji Jaama ("al-Afghani") and Moalim Burhan, assassinated by Godane loyalists in June 2013. Godane

[144] International Crisis Group, "Somalia's Islamists," *Africa Report*, No. 100 (International Crisis Group: December 12, 2005), 5-7.

[145] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17-22.

[146] International Crisis Group, "Somalia's Islamists," *Africa Report*, No. 100 (International Crisis Group: December 12, 2005), 11.

marginalized Mukhtar Robow and continued to deepen Al-Shabaab's transnational ties in 2014. The US military killed Godane in an air strike on an al-Shabaab camp in September 2014.[147]Ahmed Umar ("Abu Ubaidah"), the current leader of al-Shabaab, is continuing to pursue Godane's focus on transnational jihad. A Dutch-Somali citizen, a product of Al-Shabaab's robust ties to the Somali diaspora, masterminded the most recent major Al-Shabaab attack, a complex assault on vacationers at Lido Beach in Mogadishu on 24 January 2016.[148]

Al-Shabaab continues to generate both internal Somali resources and external support from transnational extremist groups, state sponsors, diaspora remittances, charities, kidnapping, piracy, taxation and extortion, and illegal trade. At its zenith, Al-Shabaab earned tens of millions of dollars per year from taxation.[149] AMISOM's capture of Kismayo in October 2012 should have removed a critical financial input for Al-Shabaab, with its highly lucrative taxation of the illegal charcoal trade. However, Al-Shabaab's revenue from trade at Kismayo and nearby Barawe, and illegal sugar trading across the Kenyan border, is continuing uninterrupted. Continued operations indicate Al-Shabaab maintains significant support from local clans in rural areas of south and central Somalia.[150] In early 2016, Al-Shabaab continues to rely upon a diversified network of revenue and resource streams including multiple sources of money from sugarcane and charcoal

[147] Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," *CFR Backgrounders*, Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650.

[148] "Dutch-Somali Masterminded Mogadishu Beach Bombing; 19 Killed," Somaliweyn Media Center, January 23, 2016, accessed February 23, 2016, http://somaliwayn.org/2016/01/23/dutch-somali-masterminded-mogadishu-beach-bombing-19-killed/.

[149] Matt Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity? A Report of the CSIS Africa Program* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2014), 1.

[150] Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," *CFR Backgrounders*, Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650.

exports, business and community taxation, extortion, and corruption to finance its operations.[151] The Al-Kataib faction living in the Boni Forest along Kenya's border released a video on 01 November 2015 portraying their idyllic life in the forest, where they hunt, fish, and regain strength to continue their struggle against the corrupt FSG and AMISOM.[152]

External sources of finance, support, and recruitment continue to be a large contributor to Al-Shabaab strength and survival. Diaspora remittances bring in an estimated $1 billion per year to Somalia, a portion of which finds its way to Al-Shabaab. The organization has recruited an estimated 1,000 foreign fighters from among the diaspora and hundreds of non-Somali fighters, mostly from the UK, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Recruits from the British-Somali diaspora community numbered around thirteen remaining in Somalia in early 2014, with dozens returning to Europe after attending Al-Shabaab training camps in Somalia.[153] Denmark's Somali community includes between two hundred and four hundred al-Shabaab supporters, with fifty Danish-Somali men fighting with Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Returned fighters and others inspired by them participated in attempted terrorist murder in Denmark in January 2010 and an attempted terrorist attack in May 2012. Similarly, around twenty Swedish-Somali fighters relocated to Somalia to fight with Al-Shabaab in the past five years, and the Netherlands security forces have arrested dozens of Somali Dutchmen with ties to Al-Shabaab. [154]

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[151] Tom Keatinge, "The Role of Finance in Defeating Al-Shabaab," Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies, 2014, accessed January 20, 2016, https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201412_whr_2-14_keatinge_web_0.pdf.

[152] Robyn Kreil and Brian Walker, "Al Shabaab sells terror in safari propaganda video," CNN, November 1, 2015, accessed March 10, 2016, http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/05/africa/al-shabaab-proganda-video/.

[153] Rob W. Kurz, "Europe's Somali Diaspora: Both a Vulnerability and a Strength," Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) – EUCOM, February 2014, 5, accessed January 20, 2016, http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/COCOM/EUCOM/Diaspora.pdf.

[154] Ibid., 6-7.

Al-Shabaab's resources always included both internal and external sources of support. The loss of territorial control and Godane's purges alienated Somali nationalist elements of the organizations support base, but its survival indicates a reliable clan support base and an ability to continue to profit from FSG and AMISOM, corruption allowing continued illegal trade to benefit Al-Shabaab. However, Godane's purges and removal of key nationalist figures within his organization, including Hassan Dahir Aweys, Mukhtar Robow, and Ibrahim Haji Jamaa' al-Afghani, have isolated Al-Shabaab from much of its support base and limited its appeal. Under Godane, Al-Shabaab redoubled its commitment to strengthen relationships with transnational jihadist groups as it became less able to rely on domestic resource bases and more reliant on international support and legitimacy.[155]

Analysis of Somali Scale Shift

The Al-Shabaab case demonstrates the mechanisms of scale shift and the changes in goals, operational approach, and resourcing necessary to change the scope of conflict from the intra-state to transnational level. Its emergence seems to indicate a trend toward transnational coordination and interdependence, but may also represent innovations that allow remnants of insurgency to survive effective counterinsurgency through global interconnectivity. Al-Shabaab is only the latest and most explicitly transnational of the militant factions that have dominated the Somali insurgent landscape since the end of the Cold War. The evolution of transnational Islamism in Somalia can be seen as a process of "natural selection" brought about by factional competition, external intervention, Western-backed counter-insurgency, and global Islamist external support. Al-Shabaab was a small faction of the larger Somali Islamist movement. Through this evolutionary process and its long-standing ties with transnational jihadists, the other

[155] Matt Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity? A Report of the CSIS Africa Program* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2014), 2-3.

organizations like AIAI and ICU died while Al-Shabaab survived. This evolutionary process passed through five periods in which the broad Islamist movement adjusted to external and internal pressures and shifted alliances, or failed to compete given their individual factional circumstances.

The early years of Somali insurgency demonstrate fluidity and focus on building power to control territory inside the state of Somalia. Four expansionist power holders attempted to gain broad territorial control in Somalia: the Barre regime, the Islamist AIAI, the ICU, and Al-Shabaab. The Barre regime fell because of internal weakness and clan insurgency. The AIAI and ICU regimes fell because of external Ethiopian intervention. Al-Shabaab, the most recently consolidated of these groups, continues to maintain power in the face of external AMISOM and Ethiopian intervention. The mechanisms of brokerage included transnational jihadists among the Islamist-nationalist ranks and diffusion required more expansive trans-regional aims, both of which provoked the reactions of neighbors and Western powers in two campaigns of repression.

In the Somali case, there was constant disunity within the insurgent movements due to long standing clan fissures. Although state repression was mostly absent due to a lack of security capacity, intervention by Ethiopia and AMISOM backed by the United States created the need to seek outside support from international jihadist Al-Qaeda to counter the regionalization of Al-Shabaab's opposition. These studies demonstrate the importance of insurgent disunity, state repression, and co-optation, in addition to the contentious politics variables of coordinated action, brokerage, and diffusion, as mechanisms underpinning a scale shift from intra-state insurgency to a transnational violent extremist organization.

## Research Findings

Transnational scale shift occurs when state security forces repress or co-opt nationalist insurgent elements, when transnational elements survive, and when transnational elements in other countries support them. The scale shift process is characterized by the predominance of

transnational goals over national goals and is accompanied by new tactics and external resources. This makes transnational elements less likely to defeat their states of origin than nationalist elements, but also makes them more likely to survive. In addition to the Tilly-Tarrow mechanisms of brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action, this study finds that the mechanisms of external relationships, resources, and goals, and the internal mechanisms of internal disunity, competition, repression, and co-optation create conditions for scale shift.

Insurgencies become transnational through a process of scale shift under pressure from the state. States use the mechanisms of repression and co-optation to exacerbate VEO disunity, such as factional identity, traditional enmities, or personality conflicts among the leadership. Disunity breaks insurgent factions' efforts at brokerage, diffusion, and collective action to combine and increase their collective strength. By disaggregating and isolating insurgencies into smaller, independent groups, the state can more effectively use repression and co-optation to defeat the competing groups in detail, use their disunity to further weaken them, and, ultimately, co-opt them into the state's social structure. The Tilly-Tarrow model suggests that the variables of coordinated action, brokerage, and diffusion create conditions for scale shift. The Chechen and Somali case studies in this paper suggest internal disunity, repression, and co-optation are key conditions for scale shift.

Further research should test the Tilly-Tarrow model and the mechanisms of scale shift recommended in this study. This paper's conclusions anticipate finding transnational scale shift in states with predominantly nationalist insurgencies, factions with transnational relationships, and an effective counterinsurgency strategy. Historical examples may include the 1954-1962 Algerian War of Independence, Iran before the 1979 Revolution, or the more recent 2000-2009 Plan Colombia and Integrated Action counterinsurgency campaign in Colombia. This finding also predicts that effective counterinsurgency strategies in current conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Nigeria, Kashmir, and other locations will effectively repress or co-opt nationalist insurgent threats but transnational threats will grow in strength and visibility. Transnational threats predate

the scale shift among an initially weak minority of insurgents. As state security forces eliminate nationalist competition, those elements with external relationships and goals survive and further entrench their goals at a transnational scale. These wider goals decrease their ability to achieve nationalist aims, such as regime change, but increase their ability to survive, making them more persistent, less effective, but just as dangerous.

## Recommendations

This research recommends five changes to the US military approach to defeating violent extremist organizations. The first is the introduction of a scale of conflict to US military doctrine in JP 3-0 with intra-state, inter-state, extra-state, and non-state, and transnational scales. The addition of a scale of conflict to US military doctrine will allow the military to frame conflicts based on their scale and tailor military options to address differences between intra-state, inter-state, extra-state, non-state, and transnational conflict. It will also allow commanders to identify changes in conflict scale, requiring them to reframe their understanding of the operational environment and the problem.

The second recommendation is for US military doctrine to adapt its definition of insurgency to encompass the tendency of insurgencies to become transnational as a result of effective counterinsurgency. Current US military doctrine in FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5 *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* places insurgency within an intra-state construct, which becomes problematic when an insurgency acts transnationally. The addition of a scale of conflict will help frame the changes in scale, but the definition of insurgency will need to change to include its transnational aspects or an additional term must be added to the lexicon of counterinsurgency encompassing transnational connections between intra-state insurgent groups that support each other and act together.

The third recommendation is the introduction of mechanisms of scale shift to explain why insurgents expand from intra-state to transnational conflict types. The works of Tilly and

Tarrow (2007) provide mechanisms that explain how insurgents *want* to increase their power while in competition with a state, but do not explain how they actually *behave* under effective state repression and co-optation as part of a counterinsurgency strategy. Counterinsurgency strategies add the mechanisms of state repression and co-optation and increase insurgent disunity. Understanding insurgent behavior, therefore, depends on whether the insurgency is succeeding, in which case the Tilly-Tarrow mechanisms of diffusion, brokerage, and coordinated action are explanatory, or is failing due to an effective state counterinsurgency strategy, in which case different mechanisms of internal disunity, effective state repression, and co-optation provide a better explanation of insurgent behavior.

The fourth recommendation is that each counterinsurgency should include a transnational line of effort. This line of effort must identify individuals and factions with transnational relationships, neutralize or co-opt transnationally connected individuals by defeating or discrediting the unifying narrative, or focus co-optation and repression efforts on transnational factions before they become dominant within the insurgency. Although dauntingly complicated, each transnational line of effort within a geographically specific intra-state counterinsurgency should be coordinated with other counterinsurgency and security force assistance efforts in other states. Overarching campaign plans addressing transnational conflicts are critical, but are not expansive enough when they reside within a geographic combatant command (GCC) and focus on transnational relationships in only one GCC area of responsibility (AOR). Therefore, the transnational line of effort, and possibly every counterinsurgency strategy, should reside in a functional combatant command.

The fifth recommendation is that counterterrorism and counterinsurgency targeting should focus not only on power but also on relationships. Scale shift is an evolutionary process, often extending over decades. The roots of transnational scale shift are often only identifiable in hindsight because the current US targeting methodology identifies only the most important actors in an organization struggling against a state. When these are eliminated, lower-level insurgents,

below the initial threshold of targeting efforts, increase their strength and transnational aspirations. By targeting individual insurgents with ties to insurgencies in other states, we will potentially decrease the likelihood that a counterinsurgency strategy will scale shift from intra-state to transnational.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the most powerful implication of this study is that transnational scale shift is an evolutionary process based on relationships outside of the state. For counterinsurgency to be completely effective, an additional line of effort must address factions with transnational relationships, even though these are likely to be weak or uninteresting compared to more powerful nationalist groups. Targeting these factions may be difficult for any individual state because their transnational ties and migrations are facilitated by globalization, a key foreign policy issue for the United States and Europe. Therefore, efforts to defeat transnational violent extremism should be coordinated by the United States or NATO whose Security Force Assistance (SFA) programs should coordinate to help states defeat internal insurgencies and establish security against both nationalist insurgencies and transnational extremism.

The cost of this effort and its geographic expansiveness will challenge the current US military structure based on geographic combatant commands under the Unified Campaign Plan. Such an effort will also require changes in US targeting methodology to focus on transnational relationships, especially in their early stages, rather than on key leaders in factions that already have power comparable to the state with which they compete. Targeting based on nascent relationships will meet legal difficulties because of tenuous evidence of wrongdoing and authority to capture or kill. Nonetheless, a transnational line of effort must be a component of any counterinsurgency strategy for it to work in the current US-led globalized system. The US military should either coordinate this effort between geographic combatant commanders or assign it to a functional combatant command such as Special Operations Command. Furthermore, the

effort must be closely tied into US SFA efforts that help a state defeat internal insurgencies, many of which have an international component hidden within and waiting to be revealed through the effectiveness of the state's own counterinsurgency efforts.

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